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CONSIDERATION OF EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO ENHANCE THE PROTECTION, SECURITY AND SAFETY OF DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR MISSIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Letter dated 18 September 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 12 September 1996, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Petros Solomon, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly under item 145 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Amdemicael KAHSAI
Permanent Representative

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* A/51/150.

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ANNEX

Letter dated 12 September 1996 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Eritrea addressed to the Secretary-General

The security authorities of Yemen have been detaining diplomatic pouches destined for our embassy in their capital Sanaa, since April 1996. These bags are being held by them for days and presumably searched, while daily requests by our embassy for their delivery are scornfully ignored.

This is a clear violation of article 27, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations, which provide that:

1. "The official correspondence of the mission shall be inviolable. ..."

2. "The diplomatic bag shall not be opened or detained".

My Government has made all necessary efforts through the appropriate diplomatic channels to remind the Yemeni authorities to heed conventional instruments regulating relations among the international community of States. To that effect, our embassy in Sanaa wrote two letters, dated 13 April 1996 and 18 August 1996, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Yemen, another letter dated 18 April 1996 to the Dean of Ambassadors in Sanaa, to remind the Yemeni authorities to refrain from these irregular and undiplomatic behaviours.

Two other reminder letters with the same message, date 16 April 1996 and 20 August 1996, were also sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Yemen through its embassy in Asmara. But all were to no avail. The detention of our diplomatic bags has still remained a persistent problem. It is worth pointing out at this juncture that my Government did not have the desire to reciprocate this hostile act by a similar response.

Excellency, this and other provocative acts of hostility by the Government of Yemen have been reciprocated by restraint and tolerance from my Government. However, patience has its own limits. Therefore, on behalf of my Government, I would like to request you to record this letter as document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Petros SOLOMON